

REMARKS

Claims 15-22 remain pending. Claims 1-14 and 23 have been canceled without prejudice pursuant to a restriction requirement. Claims 16 and 17 have been withdrawn from consideration, but remain pending in hopes of reaching agreement on allowable language for independent claim 15 (from which they depend). Re-examination and reconsideration of amended claims 15-22 are respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Previous pending claims 15 and 18-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,283,959 to Lalonde et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,235,019 to Lehmann et al. Such a rejection is traversed. The Lalonde et al. patent was filed on August 23, 1999. The present application is a divisional of U.S. Patent Application No. 09/203,011, which was filed on December 1, 1998. Hence, the Lalonde et al. patent is not prior art against the present application.

Amendments to the Claims

Applicants have amended independent claims 15 and 22 solely to expedite prosecution of the present application. Claim 15 now recites that the balloon engages the vessel wall surrounding a circumference of the balloon, and that fluid is expanded at first and second circumferentially separated locations within the balloon. Furthermore, claim 15 recites that expanding of a fluid at the second location evenly cools the engaged vessel wall. The difficulty in circumferentially even cooling of a radially expandable balloon does not appear to be reasonably taught or suggested in the cited art, much less the claimed method for overcoming this difficulty by providing circumferentially separated fluid expansion locations located within the balloon.

Regarding independent claim 22, Applicant notes that that claim already recited coating at least a portion of an inner surface of a balloon wall with a liquid so that the liquid vaporizes within the balloon. This element of the independent claim has not been shown to be present in the cited art references. Once again, solely to expedite prosecution of the present

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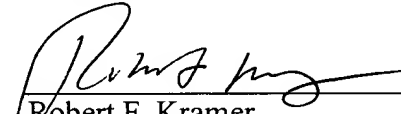
invention, independent claim 22 has been amended to recite that the liquid coating of vaporizes while the coating engages the balloon wall within the balloon. The thermal conduction between the balloon wall and the vaporizing liquid coating may help provide a more even treatment. As this advantageous aspect of the present invention has not been shown in the cited art, *prima facie obviousness* has not been established.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,


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